2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Main Committee I

Summary record of the 1st meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 26 April 2000 at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. Reyes Rodriguez ..... (Mexico)

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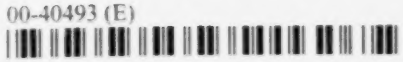

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Programme of work

1. **The Chairman** said that two documents had been distributed to the participants: the draft timetable for the work of the Committee (NPT/CONF.2000/INF.2) and the summary of questions submitted to the Committee. Three meetings would be devoted to consideration of articles I and II, preambular paragraphs 1 to 3 and the review of the implementation of article VI, one meeting to article VII and security assurances and two meetings to consideration of the report of the Committee, which would be submitted to the President of the Conference and which would include the report prepared by the subsidiary organ.

2. He would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the programme of work.

3. *It was so decided.*

General exchange of views

4. **Mr. de Icaza** (Mexico), speaking on behalf of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden, said that in 1995 the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had believed that nuclear disarmament would be substantially facilitated by the easing of international tensions and that confidence between States would be enhanced. That belief had been strengthened in 1996 by an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which had affirmed that there existed an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

5. It must be admitted that events since then in the field of disarmament and international security had not been encouraging: the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was far from having attained the number of ratifications needed to enter into force and no possibility of accelerating the ratification process was in sight; the commencement of negotiations on a treaty on fissile material faced serious difficulties and negotiations on a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances were at a standstill. Moreover, some States did not show the necessary political will to fulfil their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the systematic and progressive efforts of the nuclear-weapon States Parties had fallen short of the requirements called for by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference.

6. It was also a matter of concern that three States were operating nuclear facilities which were not safeguarded in accordance with the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), were keeping their nuclear weapons options open and had still not acceded to the Treaty; that nuclear weapons continued to be central to security policies and strategic concepts; and that nuclear doctrines were being reaffirmed.

7. It was in that context that the Brazilian, Egyptian, Irish, Mexican, New Zealand, South African and Swedish delegations were submitting to the Committee document NPT/CONF.2000/WP.3 entitled "Nuclear disarmament", as the identification of areas in which, and the means through which, further progress should be sought in the future regarding the obligation under article VI of the Treaty to achieve nuclear disarmament. In that document, the authors stressed that it was important for the five nuclear-weapon States to make an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and, in the course of the forthcoming review period 2000-2005, to engage in an accelerated process of negotiations and to take steps leading to nuclear disarmament to which all States Parties were committed under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. They also stressed that the United States of America and the Russian Federation must undertake to fully implement the Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II) and commence without further delay negotiations on START III with a view to its early conclusion.

8. They affirmed that the five nuclear-weapon States must undertake with determination the process of the elimination of their nuclear arsenals and, in that context, they should implement a set of interim measures, *inter alia*, to adapt their nuclear policies and postures so as to preclude the use of nuclear weapons; to proceed to the de-alerting and the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery vehicles and to reduce tactical nuclear weapons and proceed to their elimination as an integral part of nuclear arms reduction; to demonstrate greater transparency with regard to their nuclear arsenals and fissile material inventories; to further develop the Trilateral Initiative between the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the

International Atomic Energy Agency so as to include all five nuclear-weapon States in similar arrangements and to ensure the irreversible removal of fissile material from weapons programmes; and to apply the principle of irreversibility in all nuclear disarmament nuclear arms reduction and nuclear arms control measures.

9. They called upon States Parties that had not yet done so to sign and ratify, unconditionally and without delay, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and, pending the entry into force of the Treaty, to observe moratoria on nuclear tests.

10. They reiterated the urgency of commencing without delay negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, taking into consideration both nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament objectives, and pending the entry into force of the Treaty, the observation of a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

11. They were convinced that nuclear disarmament must be subject to multilateral consideration and therefore called for the establishment in the Conference on Disarmament of an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament.

12. They agreed that the extension and establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at, among States of the regions concerned, especially in regions of tension, such as the Middle East and South Asia, were significant contributions to a nuclear-weapon-free world.

13. They also agreed on the importance of the negotiation and conclusion at an early date of an internationally legally binding instrument to effectively assure non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

14. Finally, considering that, in order to be effective, the nuclear non-proliferation regime must be universal, they called upon those States that had not yet done so to adhere unconditionally and without delay to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and to take all the necessary measures required by adherence to that instrument as non-nuclear-weapon States.

15. The current Review Conference might be the last best opportunity to advance nuclear disarmament. The practical measures to which he had referred would, if they were implemented, contribute to a more secure planet. He therefore urged States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to strengthen the non-proliferation regime on the basis of those proposals.

16. **Mr. Randal** (New Zealand) said that the current Review Conference was crucial in that it would be instrumental in determining, on the one hand, whether international confidence in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons could be sustained and whether its indefinite extension could be upheld, and, on the other, to what extent States Parties, if they arrived at a consensus that crossed traditional alignments, could meet the requirement placed on them by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference to exercise a greater degree of accountability for their efforts in fulfilling their obligations under the Treaty.

17. It was important, at the beginning of the Conference, to keep in mind the political and legal framework of the Treaty. The Treaty clearly indicated that non-nuclear-weapon States had both the right and the responsibility to participate in nuclear disarmament. In that connection, his delegation did not ask that the negotiations on the START agreements should be open to other States Parties to the Treaty, but it believed that the States Parties to the Treaty should not be excluded in some way from the process of nuclear disarmament.

18. Moreover, the Treaty clearly established that progress on nuclear disarmament was not contingent on progress with general and complete disarmament and that, insofar as it was based on mutual obligations, no one group of States should be able to determine independently the pace with which it should be implemented.

19. His delegation welcomed the recent ratification by the Russian Federation of the START II agreements. It believed that those agreements were extremely important and urged the United States and the Russian Federation to spare no effort towards the early conclusion of the START III agreements.

20. During the past five years, there had been significant challenges to the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, challenges posed both by States Parties and by other States. With regard to the nuclear tests carried out in South Asia almost two years earlier, they might not have weakened the Treaty, but they had challenged the non-proliferation norm and brought into sharp focus the reality that the Treaty had not yet been signed and ratified by all States. In that connection, the Committee should send the strongest possible signal that demonstrations of nuclear capability could not occur with impunity and that States Parties to the Treaty should reinforce the calls made, individually and collectively, to the two States which had carried out the aforementioned nuclear tests to renounce the nuclear-weapons option and to sign and ratify the Treaty unconditionally as non-nuclear-weapon States. They should also call upon those States to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty without delay. It was also important that they should support the efforts for dialogue to urge States in the South Asia region to exercise restraint in the nuclear area and call upon another non-State Party which operated unsafeguarded nuclear facilities to accede to the Treaty and to place all its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

21. The Committee should focus immediately on the three objectives set down in the Principles and Objectives adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, the full implementation of which was proceeding slowly. Work on the conclusion of a viable fissile material cut-off treaty, in particular, was being delayed by calls for work on other issues in the Conference on Disarmament.

22. The Conference should make work on negative security assurances, which was currently at a standstill, a priority. In that connection, as his delegation had noted previously, some new creative thinking might be required. The unilateral assurances provided for in Security Council resolutions were not regarded as constituting firm and legally binding agreements. They had not been negotiated and remained unverifiable and, in view of the continuing rationalization of the use of nuclear weapons, there were questions about the security benefits they provided. On that point, his delegation had always regarded security assurances as part of the nuclear-non-proliferation "bargain", whereby non-nuclear-weapon States which had renounced the nuclear-weapons option should have the assurance of not being subjected in any way to a nuclear threat. He hoped, in that connection, that the nuclear-weapon States would ratify the protocols to the various nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

23. If its work was to be credible, the Committee could not confine its focus to what it had not been able to achieve. It must also endeavour to inject a new political determination into the process of the elimination of nuclear weapons and ensure further and faster progress in the implementation of the START agreements. In that connection, he hoped that China, France and the United Kingdom, as well as the Russian Federation and the United States of America, would undertake to eliminate their nuclear forces. The Committee should also endeavour to achieve greater transparency in the area of nuclear disarmament, to make the principle of the irreversibility of disarmament measures prevail and to ensure that States Parties acknowledged that other interim measures (the renunciation of nuclear doctrines, the de-alerting of nuclear weapons, the reduction of non-strategic weapons, and so on) could and should be adopted. In that context, he urged all delegations to support the working paper on nuclear disarmament submitted by the delegations of Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and Sweden (NPT/CONF.2000/WP.3). Lastly, the Conference and the Committee should seek a new political undertaking from the States Parties for the total elimination of nuclear weapons and urge them to accelerate the negotiations to that end.

24. **Mr. Noboru** (Japan) said that the decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons indefinitely had introduced a new chapter in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation which was marked by an effort to focus more sharply on the implementation of the letter and spirit of the Treaty. The opening of the new era had to be clearly recognized and embraced by all States Parties, both those that possessed nuclear weapons and those that did not, otherwise unnecessary divisions could be created which would weaken the non-proliferation regime from within.

25. The goal of nuclear disarmament was being pursued at several levels — the unilateral, bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral levels. The first three levels involved only the nuclear-weapon States and no one would deny the great importance of the work they

had done. The fourth involved all the States Parties to the Treaty, which were parties to the most important multilateral legal instrument on disarmament, the Treaty itself. Nuclear disarmament was not an exclusive domain of the nuclear-weapon States: it involved and affected all the States Parties to the Treaty, as was confirmed by the important progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation achieved through such multilateral agreements as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty. In that connection, it should be noted that, considering the enormous amount of work still to be done if all nuclear weapons were to be eliminated, it would be wrong to assume that the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty would exhaust all the possibilities for action at the multilateral level. It was therefore important to start at once discussions on possible future steps to be taken on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

26. The deliberations on nuclear disarmament which had been conducted in various forums clearly showed that the question of the pace of the work to be done was particularly contentious, with regard both to the assessment of the progress that had been made and to the formulation of the measures to be taken in the future. Since the international community was united in wishing to eliminate nuclear weapons, it was important to ensure that the differences of opinion on the question did not call that consensus in question. Moreover, since no concrete steps could be taken unless there was unanimity, it was evident that the only way to proceed was step by step.

27. The adoption by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament had been a major milestone in efforts to achieve the goal of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Five years had elapsed since that time and the Australian and Japanese delegations had considered it logical that the States Parties to the Treaty should not only reaffirm their commitment to the implementation of those principles and objectives, but that they should also take into account the results achieved so far and agree on further measures to promote nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. For that reason, they had submitted to the Committee a working paper entitled "Further measures to be taken for the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons" (NPT/CONF.2000/WP.1), the aim of which was to supplement the aforementioned principles and objectives with further measures. Most of those measures were already set forth in General Assembly resolution 54/54 D, entitled: "Nuclear disarmament with a view to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons". They were moderate measures which, if adopted, would increase the momentum that had been achieved in the past five years and would enable the participants in the Conference to leave with more confidence in the future.

28. With regard to the review work of the Committee, it should be noted that the previous year the Preparatory Committee, at its third session, had failed to express a view on the nuclear tests carried out in South Asia in 1998. Moreover, statements had been made in 1998 in international forums such as the United Nations General Assembly, the Security Council and the International Atomic Energy Agency, but not in the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, where they were of direct concern. His delegation believed that there should be a reference to those nuclear tests in the final documents of the Conference since otherwise the world might believe that the States Parties to the Treaty had so resigned themselves to nuclear tests that they could not even take the trouble to express their disapproval.

29. While progress had undeniably been made towards nuclear disarmament during the past decade, the record of the past four years was not entirely reassuring. Everyone acknowledged that in the pursuit of disarmament the key words were patience and perseverance. However, if the non-nuclear-weapon States were to demonstrate that they possessed such qualities, the nuclear-weapon States must also demonstrate that they possessed the corresponding virtues of sincerity and commitment. That was all the more important in that the 180 non-nuclear-weapon States which were Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had the power to make or break the Treaty.

30. The goal of the Treaty was to ensure the survival of humanity in the face of the destructive force of nuclear weapons. Whatever the Treaty might have suffered, its relevance could not be questioned since it was possible to repair it by implementing the measures that the international community had adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and those that it would agree on at the current Conference.

31. **Mr. de Albuquerque** (Portugal), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Turkey, and, in addition, Iceland and Liechtenstein, said that the States members of the European Union were strongly committed to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, to the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and to general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The 1995 Review and Extension Conference had been a milestone in efforts to prevent proliferation and ensure disarmament. The programme of action agreed upon in paragraph 4 of the decision on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament provided a standard against which progress could be measured.

32. Reviewing the goals set in 1995, he said that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had indeed been concluded and had been signed by the five nuclear-weapon States, by all the European countries and by many other States. Since then the Treaty had been ratified by all the members of the European Union. The refusal of the United States Senate to ratify the Treaty had been a setback, but the European Union welcomed the commitment expressed by the United States Government to abide by the provisions of the Treaty and to support the verification regime and the work of the Preparatory Committee of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization. The European Union called upon all States, especially the 44 States whose ratification was necessary for the Treaty to enter into force, to sign and ratify it without delay and without conditions. It welcomed the decision of the Parliament of the Russian Federation to ratify the Treaty and urged all States with nuclear capabilities to abide by a moratorium. The Review Conference should moreover consider what more could be done by States Parties to accelerate ratifications, prevent a resumption of tests and facilitate the entry into force of the Treaty.

33. South Asia continued to be a subject of concern to the European Union. The tests carried out by India and Pakistan in 1998 ran contrary to efforts towards non-proliferation and disarmament. The European Union called upon both countries to meet the requirements set out in Security Council resolution 1172 (1998). It noted that those two countries had committed themselves to a moratorium on tests and had expressed their willingness to sign the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

34. The second goal set in 1995 concerned fissile material. The European Union regretted that concrete negotiations on a treaty in that area had not yet started in the Conference on Disarmament, as a result of the annual haggling over the adoption of the Conference's work programme. It stood ready to commence the negotiations immediately and unconditionally on the basis of the Shannon report. It urged the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to reaffirm their commitment to the goal of banning the production of fissile material. It welcomed the moratorium declared by four of the five nuclear-weapon States and urged all States which had not yet done so to abide by a moratorium.

35. The third part of the programme of action adopted in 1995 concerned the reduction of nuclear weapons. The European Union welcomed the progress that had been made, unilaterally and bilaterally, in that area, especially the progress made by the United States and the Russian Federation to fulfil the START I Treaty and ratify the START II Treaty, and by France and the United Kingdom to reduce the number and type of nuclear forces in their arsenals. It was encouraged by the efforts being made by the United States and the Russian Federation concerning transparency and irreversibility with regard to fissile materials. It called upon the nuclear-weapon States to increase overall transparency and to dismantle nuclear-weapon facilities. It participated in cooperative programmes aimed at providing assistance for the safe and secure management and disposition of fissile material and related facilities. It commended the various initiatives aimed at making "excess" fissile material subject to IAEA safeguards, thereby removing it from the stock available for use in nuclear weapons. It supported the efforts based on the principles of transparency, accountability, confidence-building and irreversibility.

36. The past five years had also witnessed negative developments which had retarded progress towards nuclear disarmament. The European Union deeply regretted that important agreements necessary for the fulfilment of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons had not yet entered into force. It welcomed the approval for ratification of the START II Treaty by the Russian Parliament and hoped that that Treaty and its protocol would enter into

force promptly and would be implemented as soon as possible so that negotiations on START III could begin.

37. Efforts should address not only nuclear warhead inventories, but also non-strategic nuclear weapons. The Review Conference should focus on the latter and encourage the nuclear-weapon States which possessed such weapons, in particular the United States and the Russian Federation, to explore ways of including those weapons in future nuclear reduction and disarmament arrangements. While it commended the unilateral and reciprocal commitments made by the United States and the Russian Federation in 1991, the European Union hoped that non-strategic nuclear weapons would be taken into account in the START III negotiations with the objective of their reduction and eventual complete elimination. It reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems.

38. The European Union shared the concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. It was important that in responding to those threats States did not take any action which might harm the integrity and validity of the treaties which underpinned non-proliferation and strategic stability.

39. While the primary responsibility for negotiating the reduction of their arsenals rested with the five nuclear-weapon States, all States Parties had an obligation to further the implementation of article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. In that connection, the European Union supported the establishment of an ad hoc working group within the Conference on Disarmament under the agenda item on the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament. All States Parties to the Treaty also had an obligation to work for progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

40. The European Union welcomed the entry into force of the Convention on Chemical Weapons. It looked forward to the completion of the negotiations on a protocol designed to strengthen the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention and welcomed the agreements concluded in the field of conventional armaments. Its members took very seriously their obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the decisions and resolutions adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. The implementation of the programme of action adopted by consensus at that Conference had not been completed. Every effort should be made not only to fulfil the obligations undertaken on that occasion, but also to identify the progressive and systematic steps to be taken during the next five years. The European Union had adopted a common position in order to contribute to a structured and balanced review of the operation of the Treaty at the 2000 Conference with a view to helping to build a consensus on the substantive issues that would be discussed.

41. **Mr. de la Fortelle** (France) said that the Committee's mandate was to review the implementation of the "nuclear disarmament" component. Five years earlier the Conference had decided to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons indefinitely and had stressed the need for a dynamic and voluntary approach with a view to ensuring its full implementation. To that end it had strengthened the review process and it was in that context that the current Conference was being held. That approach had led to the adoption of decision 2, which set out an ambitious programme on the essential question of nuclear disarmament. It was legitimate that, five years later, the international community should pay particular attention to the record of the States Parties on that question and call for clear and credible goals for the next few years.

42. Reviewing the progress that had been made, he said that important results had been achieved. France could pride itself on its exemplary record and was unequivocally committed to nuclear disarmament. On the multilateral level it had proposed that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should be based on the "zero option", in other words the banning of any nuclear test or nuclear explosion, at whatever level, and that had given a decisive impetus to the negotiations. It had signed the Treaty on 24 September 1996 and had been the first nuclear State, with the United Kingdom, to ratify it, on 6 April 1998. Since then, its contribution to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, in particular of its expertise, had been considerable. It was also in favour of the universal banning of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and remained in the forefront of initiatives towards the immediate, effective and unconditional launching of the so-called "cut-off" negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

43. On the unilateral level, France had renounced the development of several programmes and was reducing substantially its nuclear arsenal, as well as its expenditure on the military nuclear sector. It had, *inter alia*, entirely abandoned the ground-to-ground nuclear component and reduced the format of the airborne and marine components; it had accordingly limited its means of deterrent to two components and reduced the overall number of means of delivery by more than half. It had adapted the operational characteristics of its nuclear capability. With the dismantling of the ground-to-ground missiles on the Plateau d'Albion, no French military deterrent force was now targeted. The alert levels of its forces had been decreased on two occasions.

44. With regard to nuclear tests and the production of fissile material, radical and unprecedented measures had been taken: the Pacific test site and the Pierrelatte enrichment plants and Marcoule processing plants had been shut down irreversibly. France had dismantled its nuclear test centre and had been the first country to have decided and undertaken to dismantle its facilities for the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons. It had also met the legitimate security concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which it had, together with the other nuclear-weapon States, given a comprehensive, collective and concrete reply through Security Council resolution 984 (1995). In addition, more than 100 States benefited from the negative security assurances given by France under the protocols annexed to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. France had renewed the commitments it had made in those protocols in legally binding instruments.

45. France welcomed the ratification by the Russian Federation of the START II Treaty, the implementation of which would pave the way for the achievement of substantial reductions in the two greatest nuclear arsenals; that measure would also make it possible for bilateral negotiations to commence on START III, thereby contributing to the reduction of all nuclear weapons. France attached the greatest importance to the maintenance of strategic stability, of which the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems was an essential element. It was concerned that the Treaty should not be called into question in any way since that might upset the strategic balances and result in a resumption of the arms race.

46. There were some who might regard the outcome of multilateral efforts disappointing, but it should be remembered that it had been possible to negotiate and conclude the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty within the deadline, barely one year after the 1995 Conference, even though it was far from entering into force. The commencement of negotiations on a "cut-off" treaty was still blocked in Geneva. It was up to the 2000 Conference to give a decisive impetus to those negotiations. Those who would impede them had not given sufficient consideration to the contribution that such a treaty would make to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, or perhaps they were fundamentally opposed to what should be the common objective: progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

47. Delegations did not have the same appreciation of the progress that had been achieved. What appeared to some to be a considerable achievement within the space of a few years could seem insufficient to others in view of the scale of the challenge posed by the total elimination of nuclear weapons. While his delegation respected that difference in approach, it believed that it was important to arrive at a common assessment of the key elements of the results, or at least to bring the points of view closer together. It was above all by the ability to ensure the continuity of the dynamic in favour of nuclear disarmament imparted by the decisions taken in 1995 and to identify realistic goals that the participants in the Conference would be judged.

48. Some who had been disappointed at the slow progress wondered about the sincerity of the commitment to the process made by the nuclear-weapon States while others advocated new approaches which, in their view, would accelerate it. The uncertainty and instability which the world was currently experiencing and the inability to interpret it and its implications for disarmament were no stranger to those reflections. The new international context should certainly encourage realism, but that should in no way signify immobility. For its part, France had, through its actions, demonstrated its willingness to fulfil in good faith the commitments it had undertaken.

49. The common willingness to move forward should, more than ever, result in more importance being given to the effectiveness and solidity of the disarmament process than to short-lived declarations. The best way to proceed in that direction continued to be the full implementation of decision 2 adopted in

1995. Since the programme set out in that basic text was far from being implemented, it was important to do everything possible to ensure the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the commencement without further delay of effective negotiations on a treaty on fissile material.

50. The joint implementation of those two instruments was an essential element before a new hurdle in nuclear disarmament was tackled. One of the major challenges to the credibility of the international non-proliferation regime and the goal of disarmament was to ensure the universality of its constituent components; it was less a question of tending towards absolute mathematical universality than of embracing the initiatives of the potential actors in nuclear disarmament. It was essential to bring together other countries which, like India, Pakistan and Israel, had chosen to remain outside the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Because of the regional context in which they were involved, those States had important responsibilities: they had to demonstrate their commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Only a constructive approach, going beyond the rhetoric of condemnation, would make it possible to take up that challenge.

51. France attached importance to the continuation, and if possible the intensification, of negotiations between the two main protagonists in the process of the overall reduction of arsenals and general and complete disarmament, namely the United States and the Russian Federation. For its part, it had always refused to engage in a competition with the other nuclear Powers and intended to pursue in the future with determination the policy of strict sufficiency which had always guided its actions.

52. It was important to be aware of the evolution in the demands of the international community and public opinion for greater transparency, dialogue and confidence. If those demands were increasingly taken into account, it would undoubtedly contribute significantly to the process of nuclear disarmament properly speaking.

53. **Mr. Vacek** (Czech Republic) said that his country associated itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. Without wishing to repeat the statements made in the general debate in plenary meeting, he thought that a number of points were worth developing in the Committee. A relevant, realistic and balanced approach was the only way to achieve progress. After having listened to the statements made by other speakers, his delegation believed that the alarmist comments were not entirely justified; the situation with regard to nuclear disarmament was somewhat eased and that should be taken into account in the work and results of the Conference.

54. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty had been concluded since the previous Review Conference and it was currently being implemented technically. It was admittedly regrettable that Treaty had not yet entered into force for various reasons, including the nuclear explosions in South Asia, but it must be noted that encouraging progress had recently been achieved, for example in the form of further ratifications. His delegation, which provided the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, hoped that the progress would continue and result in the implementation of the principles and objectives adopted by the previous Review Conference. It urged States whose signature was necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty to do what was required without delay.

55. There should be no increase in the number of conferences necessary for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Conference held the previous autumn should be sufficient and one more conference was to take place in 2001 in order to maximize the effects. The Treaty should enter into force fairly soon, in any event before the next review conference. The Preparatory Committee, which would begin its work in Geneva in the next few days, should make it possible to take stock of developments in the situation and of the technical progress achieved. The next stage was to conclude the treaty governing relations between the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization and the United Nations. His delegation hoped that the difficulties which still persisted would be quickly overcome so that the agreement could be adopted and submitted to the General Assembly.

56. Many obstacles continued to paralyse the work of the Conference on Disarmament. The fact that negotiations on the conclusion of a treaty banning the production of fissile material had not yet begun was a great disappointment and a major setback in the general context of the implementation of the principles and objectives of the Conference. The negotiation of such a treaty should be regarded as a priority and the Review Conference should provide an impetus in that

connection. He welcomed the fact that four nuclear-weapon States had decided to abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material but regretted that others had not done likewise.

57. Participation in the Conference on Disarmament should be open to all States which wished to take part; the exclusiveness currently practised was not justifiable. The Czech Republic, which had the status of an observer, had still not obtained the status of a member. The principle of universality should be applied in that area.

58. With regard to article VI of the Treaty on Non-Proliferation, it was true that the deliberations had not developed in a particularly dynamic way. There were, however, grounds for cautious optimism in that, since the previous Conference, the START II Treaty had been ratified and the outlook was good for the START III negotiations to commence in a constructive atmosphere. Like the European Union, his delegation hoped that the negotiations would result in concrete and verifiable measures and in the elimination of tactical nuclear weapons through an appropriate contractual instrument.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.